

Avoiding Run-Ons

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Identify and correct run-on sentences
- Write with complete sentences that do not run together

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for students of:

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 15.
- **Practice Worksheets**, Levels A and B, pp. 16–17.
- **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 18.

Teach

1. **Avoiding Run-On Sentences:** If you have discussed sentence fragments with students, point out that run-on sentences are, in a way, just the opposite.

- Write the following examples, and explain that, while a sentence fragment contains *too little* information to form a complete sentence, a **run-on sentence** contains too much information—two or more complete thoughts, without pause or close relation.

EXAMPLES

A seashell with a woven pattern, half hidden in the sand. (fragment)

I found shells, then I put them on my castle, after that I went swimming. (run on)

- Explain that a run-on sentence is appropriately named, because it runs on and on without coming to a full stop. A run-on sentence does not show where one idea ends and another begins.
- Have students suggest a third sentence which is one complete thought, containing a subject, verb, and any related words or phrases.

2. **Teaching Avoiding Run-On Sentences:** Distribute the **Lesson Summary** and go over the **Academic Vocabulary** box.

- Make sure students understand that all run-on sentences string together two or more sentences that need to be separated but that there are two kinds of run-on sentences: (a) those that are missing punctuation marks altogether, and (b) those that need a stronger mark of punctuation than a comma.
- Review **Steps 1 and 2** by first asking volunteers to define a complete sentence. (*A complete sentence is a group of words containing a subject and a verb and expressing a complete thought.*)
- Call on a volunteer to read aloud the example of a run-on sentence, while other students listen for the reader's pause. Students should recognize that, although the entire group of words concerns soccer, it contains two quite different ideas: the fact that soccer is the world's most popular sport and the fact that it is the writer's favorite team sport.
- On their copies, have each student correct the run-on sentence by placing a period after *today* and beginning the new sentence with a capital letter. Then have students check their work in **Step 2**.

AVOIDING RUN-ONS, CONTINUED

- Review **Steps 3 and 4**. Point out to students that they will be ahead of many of their peers if they master the skill of avoiding run-ons. Explain that run-on sentences like are the sixth most common error in the writing of American students generally.

3. Guided Practice: Direct students' attention to **Step 4** on the **Lesson Summary**. Go over with students these three possible ways to correct run-ons. Stress that the choice of method depends on how closely related the two ideas are in meaning.

- Have volunteers read the three revisions aloud.
- Invite the class to choose the revision that is most appropriate. (*All answers are acceptable. The revisions that link related ideas are a and b.*)
- Lead a discussion in which students explain why they chose the method they did.
- Finally have student pairs work together, writing run-ons with missing punctuation, then trading and correcting each other's problem sentences.

QUICK CHECK. Write each numbered sentence on the board and ask students to explain what is wrong and then correct it.

1. A soccer team includes eleven players only the goalkeeper may handle the ball. (*Two complete sentences expressing different ideas are run together and should be separated by an end mark. **Revision:** A soccer team includes eleven players. Only the goalkeeper may handle the ball.*)
2. The size of a soccer field may vary, most fields measure 100–130 yards long and 50–100 yards wide. (*Two sentences expressing related ideas are separated only by a comma. **Revision:** The size of a soccer field may vary, but most fields measure 100–130 yards long and 50–100 yards wide. OR The size of a soccer field may vary; most fields measure 100–130 yards long and 50–100 yards wide.*)

Practice and Apply

Activities involving correcting run-on sentences appear on pp. 16–17.

- Assign **Practice Worksheet A** to students who need more structured activities.
- Assign **Practice Worksheet B** to grade-level or above-level students.

Sample Answers: Practice Worksheet A

1. Soccer probably began during the Middle Ages. Teams of English villagers played the first soccer games.
2. The first international match was between England and Scotland. This competition took place in 1872.
3. C
4. In the United States amateur soccer is popular; many boys and girls love the game.
5. Almost 15 million young people participate in organized soccer, and about 40 percent of them are women players.
6. The equipment used in many sports has changed over time, and soccer is no exception.
7. In the 1800s, for example, soccer shoes reached above the ankle, and steel and chrome toecaps protected a player's feet.

AVOIDING RUN-ONS, CONTINUED

8. Soccer shoes today may weigh less than eight ounces. They have studs of different materials to suit different field conditions.

9. C

10. Leather soccer balls have good air resistance, so they don't wobble in flight.

Sample Answers: Practice Worksheet B

1. Rugby is another popular sport throughout the world. It is related to soccer.

2. The name rugby comes from Rugby School in England; it was here that the first game was played in 1823.

3. Rugby actually started during a soccer game. A student named William Webb Ellis picked up the ball and ran with it.

4. A rugby ball looks much like an American football, but it is easier to kick and harder to pass.

5. C

6–10. Lacrosse is another exciting, fast-paced team sport. Lacrosse players need endurance, and North American Indians played an early form of the game as part of their war training. The Indians called their game baggataway, but the sport's modern name comes from the French Canadians. At the time, hooked sticks with nets were used to throw, catch, and carry the ball. These sticks reminded French settlers of a bishop's staff or crozier, so they called the game "la crosse" ("the cross").

Assess and Reteach

Use these guidelines to determine if students need the **Reteaching Worksheet**.

- **Practice Worksheet A:** Students should answer at least seven of items 1–10, and at least three of items 11–14 correctly.
- **Practice Worksheet B:** Students should answer at least four of items 1–5 correctly. Students should correct the 4 run-on in items 6–10.

For students who need reteaching, review the **Student Lesson Summary**. Focus on the examples, and relate them to the definitions. Brainstorm one or two new examples with students—both of run-on errors and their revisions. Then have them complete the **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 18.

Sample Answers: Reteaching Worksheet

1. Comic strips are cartoons that tell a story. They are popular with people of all ages.

2. The boxes containing the scenes are called panels; the spaces containing the dialogue are called speech balloons.

3. Comic strips first appeared in newspapers in the 1890s. The first comic character was called the "yellow kid."

4. Early comic strips featured numerous situations and characters. Many people called the strips "funnies."

5. C

6. In the 1930s comics expanded, and some strips created then survived for more than 40 years.

AVOIDING RUN-ONS, CONTINUED

7. *C*
8. Tarzan's creator, *Harold Foster*, wanted to tell realistic adventure stories, so he borrowed techniques from the movies.
9. Today's readers still love adventure. They will recognize several characters from the 1920s and 1930s, including *Superman*, *Dick Tracy*, and *Little Orphan Annie*.
10. Two of these characters have appeared in movies and TV shows, and one has appeared in a play.